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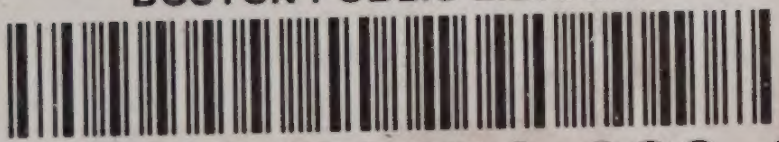

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# ORNAMENT,

OR THE

# Christian Rule of Dress;

CONTAINING

STRICTURES ON JUDSON'S "LETTER TO CHRISTIAN FEMALES, ON PLAIN DRESS."

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

BY MRS. MARY I. TORREY.

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BOSTON:

CROCKER AND BREWSTER.

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# PREFACE.

THE author is aware that many worthy and judicious christians may doubt the expediency of agitating this subject, or especially doing anything which may seem to countenance the follies of the present day. The writer also, felt for some time great reluctance at doing that which has since seemed to be duty, but certain circumstances having developed more fully than usual, the effects which Mr. Judson's tract had produced, the writer was led to a more serious consideration

of the subject. It was judged that about 50,000 copies of his letter were printed by the benevolent public; and it is well known, that 'the revival tract society now commend it to the friends of practical godliness.'

The same principles of benevolent effort have also been advocated by many of our religious periodicals, and the letter has given rise to sundry other publications upon the subject, advocating the same principles. The 'Plain Dress Societies,' which he recommended, have passed away, after a career of ruin to the piety of many, and the sanity of some. But their influence

still lives. No single tract, probably, has produced more wide spread and lasting effects upon the Christian community. It is still often referred to as an authority, and presented to Christian females, as a reproof, and a guide in duty. For this reason, and likewise because it was the first publication on the subject, and contains or involves all the principles on which the question of duty turns, it was selected as the basis of discussion. The writer, however, has not confined herself to the topics noticed in his brief pamphlet.

Now it is not because it is feared that the community will dress *too*

*little*, or that *too much* will be given for the rescue of a perishing world, that anything has been written. But the reasons are two-fold. First, it has established a wrong test of Christian character, and by that means done much injury, although the immediate effects seemed beneficial. And to attempt to christianize the world by presenting a false standard of piety, is to 'do evil that good may come.'

But, secondly, it is an appalling, undeniable fact, that but *few*, besides those who adopt Mr. Judson's views, attempt *at all* to dress from principle; and his followers, having adopted principles *necessarily* in-

consistent with their practice, commit daily more sin, than those who do not violate their consciences.

It is with the hope of remedying the evil *in some measure*, by answering the inquiry, 'what shall we do,' so often asked by those who have just awaked, that anything has been written upon the subject. And the writer trusts, that while a candid perusal of it will injure no one, it may throw some light upon a dark and intricate subject, and be the means of leading some at least, to a more intelligent, conscientious and faithful discharge of their duties to themselves, and a dying world.

*Salem, Sept.* 1, 1838.

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# LETTER I.

Introduction.—Statement of principles.—Sale of ornaments for benevolent purposes.—Nothing insignificant.

DEAR MADAM,

Having perused the little tract you handed me, I cannot forbear, as I return it, to make some remarks which have been suggested while reading it. I doubt not the kindness and purity of motive, which led you to turn my attention to it, and in reply, I can say, *it is worthy of consideration.* It cannot be otherwise. A document proceeding from the pen of a worthy brother, whose praise is in all the churches, should not be received with indifference. But that is not the only reason why it is worthy of consideration. It is a talented production. It

is a powerful soul-stirring appeal, and the author evidently felt that he was doing God service.

But admitting all this, yet is it true? That is, have you examined the principles upon which his appeal is based, and can you subscribe to them, stripped of the beautiful coloring which they have received from the gifted Judson? I shall not attempt to say there is *no* truth in it; there is much, and I would hope, much of the spirit of the Gospel. But truth mixed with error, becomes a compound more dangerous than error alone. And does it not set up a false standard of truth and piety? It was the prayer of Christ, with reference to his disciples, "Sanctify them through the truth; thy word is truth." One great reason why it is so difficult to convert the heathen, and all other sinners, is that we so often raise *false* standards

of truth, which God cannot own and bless. And in the matter of dress, where so much must be done, one false step, however small, must be retraced, before the work of reformation can proceed.

But before hastily condemning it, let us together examine the principles of that letter, which has produced such an effect in the Christian community.

He does not attempt to argue the case, but takes it for granted in the commencement, that all ornament is wrong, and then proceeds to urge its immediate abandonment. In the latter part of it, he exhibits his principles more fully. I will quote his words. "As a counterpart to the societies just mentioned," alluding to Temperance associations, "may I respectfully mention, that *Plain Dress Societies* be formed in every city and village throughout our land, recogniz-

ing two fundamental principles; the one based on 1 Tim. 2: 9—*all ornaments and costly dress to be disused;* the other on the law of general benevolence—*the avails of such articles, and savings resulting from the Plain Dress system, to be devoted to the purposes of charity.*"

The consideration of the first principle, I will leave to a subsequent Letter, when more attention can be devoted to it, and the truth of it more fully discussed. But for the sake of argument, let us suppose it *true.* Let us see how it will affect the second.

"The avails of such articles, and the savings resulting from the Plain Dress system, to be devoted to the purposes of charity." Of course, he intended they should be *sold.* But if it is wrong for us to retain them, it is wrong for others to *buy* them. And how small a part can ever be used for

any other than an ornamental purpose? But if we sell them for the use for which they were designed, who will dare to buy them? Of course no one who obeys the command of God, according to *his* principles. The wicked only, are those who have any use for them, and those who have repented of wearing them, must furnish the means of sin to the impenitent, that they may send the gospel to the heathen with the avails! Is not this upon a par with many reasons urged in excuse of the sale and manufacture of all those intoxicating beverages which curse our land? And have they not all received the censure of "doing evil that good may come?"

I will ask then, shall I go into my closet, as our good brother requests, lay open the Bible in the place he has mentioned, and in the presence of God and my own soul, pronounce all

ornaments wrong, bedew them with the tears of contrition, and consecrate them to the cause of charity, or in other words, for benevolence' sake, place those things in the hands of the impenitent, which will ruin their souls? God forbid! If the Christian, whom God has renewed, cannot wear them without injury, much less can those who have never known the way of life. If his *first* principle be true, rather let us assemble all our ornaments in one vast pile, and burn the mount, which separates between us and God, and as the smoke of it ascends, let all their former wearers cry, Amen, Alleluia.

But there are other minor points, which perhaps, will bear scrutiny no better than the one alluded to. Under the fourth head he remarks, "anticipate the happy moment, hastening on all the wings of time, when your joyful

spirits will be welcomed into the assembly of the just made perfect. You appear before the throne of Jehovah—the approving smile of Jesus fixes your everlasting destiny, and you are plunging into the 'Sea of life and love unknown, without a bottom or a shore.' Stop a moment—look back on yonder dark and miserable world that you have left; fix your eye on the meagre, vain, contemptible articles of ornamental dress, which you once hesitated to give up for Christ, the king of glory; and on that glance, decide the question instantly and forever.

"Surely you can hold out no longer. You cannot rise from your knees in your present attire. Thanks be to God, I see you taking off your necklaces and earrings, tearing away your ribbons and ruffles, and superfluities

of head-dress, and I hear you exclaim, "What shall we do next?" "

In the above quotation, he has taken for granted, that all ornaments are wrong, and then as the highest motive which he could urge in favor of their immediate abandonment, presents in glowing colors their *insignificance*, compared with the joys of heaven, and love of the ever blessed Savior. But the *insignificance* which these ornaments assume, when compared with the Sun of Righteousness, is no argument in favor or against their use. Which of all our comforts and conveniences, our temporal joys, or our social relations, will not shrink from a comparison with infinite loveliness? And should we hesitate to give them up for Christ, the King of glory, would they not prove us unworthy of him? One great beauty of the Divine system, arises from the

fact that nothing is insignificant in its *place.*

Filial affection is right, but Christ says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." Now the fact that we should give up our ornaments for Christ, no more proves that they are wrong, than the fact that we should give up our parents for Christ, proves that filial affection is wrong.

But perhaps Mr. Judson had forgotten, that when the beloved disciple, in the Spirit, visited the heavenly city, of which the Lord God and the Lamb were the light and glory, that the golden streets, and pearly gates, the amethyst, topaz, emerald, and other precious stones were not beneath *his* notice, nor a proper admiration of them, inconsistent with true devotion.

But let us look again. He inquires the *motives* which lead us to attire ourselves in this manner. He asks, is it not a desire of setting off one's person to the best advantage, and of exciting the love and admiration of others? I would reply, it may be so, or it may not; these are undoubtedly some of the reasons, but not all. But allowing these to be the motives, are these motives wicked? Does he not here attack the principle of self-love? We all believe *selfishness*, that is, *supreme* love of self, is wrong; yea it lies at the foundation of all iniquity, is the end and essence of all sin. But does he, or any other theologian contend, that a regard for self in proportion to one's importance in the scale of being is wrong? If he says it is not, then he allows, that it may be possible to regard self without selfishness. And,

furthermore, does not God require us to pay a certain regard to self? Are not the requirements of his law founded, *in part*, on that principle, and can they be obeyed without regard to self, in some measure?

I have not written thus because I fear the community will not regard self enough, but it is important that no standard of christian duty be raised, which they must disregard, in the performance of their daily duties.

With respect and christian affection,
I remain your friend.

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## LETTER II.

Is *all* ornament wrong?

DEAR MADAM,

Let us to-day examine the truth of his main principle. I have heretofore spoken only of minor points, but the whole appeal stands or falls by the

decision of the following question: is *all* ornament wrong?

I can sympathize with him in the *evils* of which he complains, but prefer to counteract them by truth rather than error; and it is by truth only we would hope Mr. J. would benefit the benighted souls among whom he is laboring.

I have said he proceeded upon the principle that *all* ornament is wrong. I do not mean that he has asserted this in so many words, but let us see how near he approaches it. He says, "*all* ornament and costly dress to be disused, based upon I. Tim. 2: 9." That is equivalent to saying, that that passage forbids all ornament and costly dress. Now if that portion of scripture, or any other, forbids the use of all ornaments, then they must be wrong on some ground or other. He could not mean, that it was to be dis-

used on the ground that "all things which are lawful are not expedient," for it is vain to talk of expediency, when we have a positive precept to govern us. Besides, he made the renunciation of all ornament a condition of church membership, declaring that he could neither baptize or administer the Lord's Supper to the baptized, while in that attire. And in the conclusion, he sets forth the practice of wearing ornaments, as a defiance of God's authority.

Now let us consider whether the Bible and Judson agree. If God be for him, who can be against him? But the better to be understood, let us define our terms. Ornament is any combination or arrangement which gratifies the taste. If the Bible forbid it, it must do it either *expressly*, or by *implication*. If the Bible forbid it *expressly*, then it must

be either on the principle that it is *wrong in itself*, or it must forbid it by a *positive precept*. That is, *a command not growing out of the nature of things, nor one which condemns the thing itself, but a precept which has respect to the will or choice of the sovereign, or the circumstances in which the subject is placed.* On one of these two grounds, the Bible must condemn it if at all, and either of them would claim our cheerful and prompt obedience. But as truth never suffers from close inspection, let us inquire whether the Bible makes it appear that *all ornament is wrong in itself considered.*

Positive precepts do not bind the lawgiver; but things, which are right and wrong in themselves, would be right and wrong for God; consequently, if all ornament is wrong in itself considered, and God has ever

required any to be made, or used, then it follows *irresistibly*, that God did wrong. But who dares convict Him of sin? Rather let every mouth be shut, and the whole world stand guilty before God. But it is a fact, that God required ornamental work to be done, and made special provision for it in numerous instances in the Old Testament. Did he not provide men skilled in all manner of cunning work in brass and in iron? and women, in all manner of curious needle work? Did he not regulate the dress of the priesthood, and make it highly ornamental? Did he not direct respecting adorning the temple with pomegranates and flowers? Consequently if it is condemned in the Bible, it is not upon the ground that it is wrong in itself.

Let us inquire, secondly, whether it is forbidden by any positive precept. And we need not tarry long before de-

ciding this question. I do not ask if there are *any* precepts respecting dress, for those will be attended to subsequently; but it is, I believe, plain to all, that there is no positive precept which forbids all ornament. Then we come to this important conclusion, the Bible does not *expressly* forbid or condemn all ornament.

The next inquiry of importance is, Does the Bible *impliedly* forbid or condemn all ornament?

God has given us two ways in which to decide between truth and error; the one by express commands, and the other by general principles, which will apply to every conceivable case of duty. Consequently, when we go to the Bible to ascertain what God will have us do, we must first search for an express command; if that cannot be found, we must refer to general principles.

Now we have before seen, that the Bible does not forbid all ornament *expressly;* let us then refer to the general principles by which all questions may be decided. The two great principles upon which the whole law is founded, or rather, as Christ says, contain the whole law, are love to God, and love to men. Let us now see if all ornament is inconsistent with love to God. We love God for what he is, that is, we love his *character*. And how do we become acquainted with His character? Most evidently, by His works, and His word. His word represents Him as perfectly holy, wise, just and good. His works also exhibit the same features of his character. But what are His works? Let the flowery fields, the variegated meadows, the rose and the tulip answer. Ask the fish of the sea, whose gorgeous

attire adorns our cabinets and dwellings, and they will reply, "In us behold the handiwork of our Creator." Go even to the bowels of the earth, and there do the diamond of Golconda, and other precious stones, exhibit His infinite skill. Now if we love God's character, and his character is displayed in his work, and these ornaments are a *part* of his works, does it not follow that the use of ornament is not inconsistent with love to God?

But again, let us listen to something from His holy word, which seems to touch this matter. Ex. 31 : 1, 2, 3. And the Lord spake unto Moses, See, I have called by name, Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship, &c.

Let us now see if it interferes with

proper love to man. God has made man with tastes of wonderful variety, and man *instinctively* gratifies these tastes. Now these tastes are neither sinful or holy, but were made to enhance man's physical and social enjoyment, and a proper gratification of these is right; and the fact that God has done much to gratify these tastes, seems sufficient proof that all ornament is not inconsistent with love to man. Then if all ornament does not clash with the principles upon which hang all the law and the prophets, certainly it does not clash with *minor* principles. Here, then, we come to the irresistible conclusion, that all ornament is not wrong, inasmuch as it is not condemned either expressly, or by implication in the Word of God. But perhaps you will say; Why lay so much stress, on the phrase *all ornament?* Perhaps Mr.

Judson meant we should understand all *personal* ornament. I have three answers to make to this question. First, he did not *say* so. Second, he was not *understood* so; for the plain dress advocates were as conscientious respecting their furniture, as their dress. Third, the arguments urged against it would apply with equal, or greater force, to *other* than personal ornament.

I remain your affectionate friend.

# LETTER III.

Is *any* ornament wrong? meaning of 1 Tim. 2:9 and 1 Pet. 3:3—Dr. Bloomfield's views.

DEAR MADAM,

Having seen that the Bible does not forbid *all* ornament either expressly or impliedly, we will to-day inquire whether *any* ornament is forbidden? Mr. Judson refers us to 1 Tim. 2:9, for his principle that all ornament is wrong, but as he has been proved incorrect on that ground, let us see if the passage to which he clings with so much tenacity forbids *any*. Let us hear the words of inspiration. After speaking of the duty of men to "pray every where," he adds, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with

shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Let us in the first place look at the things which many suppose this passage to forbid. In the first place, "broidered hair." What is broidered hair? It must evidently mean hair braided, puffed, curled, or fixed in some other way to gratify the taste of the wearer and command the admiration of her associates.

But the same apostle has said, "If a woman have long hair it is a glory unto her"—that is, an ornament proper for her sex; but if a woman retains her *glory* how shall she arrange it in any neat and comfortable way, without making it more ornamental, and the possible occasion of pride and vanity. Consequently if this passage is understood literally, then it is plain

that a woman has no right to wear long hair, unless she allows it to flow naturally in the neck. But an argument which proves too much is good for nothing.

Again it is an established rule that parallel passages interpret each other. Now let us look at the passage which Mr. Judson allows to be parallel, or rather, of which he says, "the import is the same," 1 Peter 3:3, 4, 5, "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." Now what is the evident meaning of this passage?

Is it not plain? Let not your adorning *consist* in these things. See to it that your heart is not set upon them. If then this is a true exposition of the above mentioned passage, and this is to interpret the *other*, is it not evident, that 1 Tim. 2:9, cannot be understood as a positive precept?

The *latter* part of the passage, is worthy of separate consideration; "For after this manner in the old time did holy women who trusted in God adorn themselves," &c. But we know also from scripture that holy women did adorn themselves with gold and silver and costly array. We have an instance in the family of the Father of the faithful, who sent costly jewels to the future wife of his son Isaac. This whole transaction seemed to meet with the approbation of God. Knowing then these two things, viz: that holy women of old *did* adorn

themselves with a meek and quiet spirit, and that they *also* arrayed themselves in costly apparel, and decked themselves with jewels, we see that these two things are not *necessarily* inconsistent with each other.

Again Dr. Bloomfield in his critical notes upon the New Testament remarks that the negative Greek particle there used, according to a fair Greek construction, should have been translated, *rather than*, which would make the passage read thus, "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: *rather than* with broidered hair," &c.

But he alludes to a passage in Isaiah 3:17—26, which has reference to the "wimples and crisping pins, the bonnets and the hoods, &c." Let us examine the import of this passage. After an attentive perusal

of this portion of scripture, do you not find that the Prophet first describes the Daughters of Zion as haughty and wanton, and then warns them of the destruction which God will bring upon them on account of their wickedness, and portrays in a graphic manner the scenes of desolation which will follow, of all those things which their souls trusted in, to the neglect of God and His kingdom? That is not condemning the things themselves, but the supreme love of them.

But you say, how did Paul intend to be understood, when he exhorts us "not to be conformed to this world, &c.?" I answer, the meaning is very evident, "Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed"—how? "By the *renewing of your minds.*" He says nothing respecting renewing their *garments*. This being

the case we may safely conclude that the word of God does not forbid any ornament. And, Dear Madam, if God has not decided this point, who shall? Some dress is necessary both as a protection from the inclemencies of the climate, and as a preservative of personal and mental purity; but the Bible has no where prescribed any particular mode of dress, but God has left us with the tastes which he has given us, which are neither sinful or holy, and the general principles of His Holy Word to ascertain our duty in this particular. Does not this look like leaving it to our own discretion? But if man attempts to do that, which God in infinite wisdom has seen fit not to do, is arrogance too mild a name for it? Is it not binding our consciences by presenting that as a christian duty which God has not enjoined? Rather is it not "teaching

for doctrines the commandment of men?" Adding is pronounced equally sinful with diminishing from the word of God.

Yours with esteem and affection.

# LETTER IV.

General Benevolence.—True self-denial.—Disastrous results of Mr. Judson's views carried out in practice.—Ornament worn for the glory of God.

DEAR MADAM,

Perhaps you may inquire, Do not the principles of *general benevolence and love to dying souls*, require us to give up these things, even though you can prove from the Bible that you are not required to do it? Shall we go on and attire ourselves according to our own desires and gratify the tastes which God has given us, while many are perishing for bread, and millions going down to the gates of woe, when a few dollars from each of us would

be the means of giving to many the "oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This is an important question, and though quite direct, it cannot be answered with *truth* either affirmatively or negatively. The law of benevolence, I would willingly answer, requires the lesser good to be sacrificed to the greater; but Mr. J.'s mistake consists in making our own gratification *necessarily opposed* to the general good. But our own gratification is a *part* of the general good which must be sacrificed to the good of others or not, as circumstances require. If I give up a gratification, which on the whole is the means of good to all my fellow creatures, I do wrong, though I exercise self-denial. But if I give up a gratification, which, while it affords me pleasure, on the whole is the means of evil or inconvenience to the

rest of the world, or a large part of it, then I do right, and nothing more than my duty; self-denial is then in its proper place. Then the question to be decided, is, whether giving up all arrangement or combination which gratifies the taste—for this is our definition of ornament—would on the whole be a benefit or injury to the world. I shall endeavor to show that it would be an injury.

In the first place, it would be a great and wicked waste.

If Mr. Judson's principle be true, that all ornament is wrong, then it is wrong to retain it, and the sooner it is destroyed, shall we be rid of the tremendous influence that it exerts. But what article of comfort or convenience can you find which is not more or less ornamental? And what room can you find which is furnished consistently with his principles? If then it is

*difficult* to find *one article* or *one room* which is freed from the accursed thing, picture to yourself the scene of desolation which must follow, should we attempt the destruction of all things ornamental.

In the second place, it would be a death blow to the hopes of the industrious and enterprising poor, by setting aside the principle of division of labor, which, according to Dr. Wayland and other political economists, is the source of national wealth and prosperity.

What would become of that kind and affectionate daughter, who toils early and late to complete a piece of embroidery, the compensation for which is the only dependence of her sick and destitute mother? You may ask, can she not obtain plainer work? But plainer work, if she could obtain it, would not afford equal compensa-

tion, and, besides, if all resort to plainer work, as they must necessarily, if they act on his principles, there would not be enough for all to have a share. Those who have no work, consequently receive no *money*, and on that account must produce themselves, all the articles they wish to consume, or dispense with them, and that would be impossible, while society is in a civilized state.

In the third place, it would destroy commerce and intercourse between nations, and finally, put an end to all further missionary operations.

We have seen that the nation would be much poorer from the tremendous loss, occasioned by the conscientious destruction of all ornament; and we have seen also, that it would set aside the principle of division of labor, which is the source of a nation's wealth. Now the wealth and pros-

perity of a nation is indicated, *in part*, by its commerce, but if it have no wealth, commerce must necessarily cease; and if commerce should cease, how can supplies and recruits be sent to the missionary fields? It would be an unheard of expense to fit out enough ships expressly for that purpose. But we have before seen, that the community would be unable to meet the demands which this would impose upon them. Thus it is evident, that denying ourselves all ornament, would be an injury to the community, and also to the perishing heathen, whom it is designed to benefit.

But perhaps you inquire, shall we spend all we can afford, in decking our persons and dwellings, because denying ourselves of all ornament would be injurious? The reply is easily given. Do as you do now.

"Live within your means," but in the words of Elijah, make first thereof a little cake at the command of the Lord, and live thou and thy son upon the rest.

In view of these things, we safely draw the following inference. If the Bible does not forbid *any* ornament, and it would be an injury to the community, to dispense with *all ornament*, then it is the duty of Christians to wear their ornaments to the glory of God. To inscribe "holiness to the Lord upon the bells of their horses," and if their ornaments are likely to be the occasion of sin, resist that temptation, and let the grace of God shine with brighter lustre, in preserving them from it.

We must glorify God in our use of the things of this world, or we never shall be prepared to receive the reward of the good and faithful steward.

Or, in the words of Christ: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of *unrighteousness*, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Your affectionate friend.

## LETTER V.

Following the fashions.—What is extravagance.—Limits of duty.—Extravagance sinful.—Conclusion.

DEAR MADAM,

I hear you inquire, how can we wear our ornaments to the glory of God? I will also ask another question. How can we eat and drink to the glory of God? When we speak of living to the glory of God, and doing things for His glory, what do we mean? Most evidently, we mean to *honor him*, and do things with an ultimate reference to his honor. We honor God when we exhibit his character; and also when we *prepare* to do it, the *preparation* may be said to be done to His glory. For instance,

we cannot exhibit God's character in eating and drinking, yet as he has commanded us to eat and drink to his glory, we know that it can be done, and as eating and drinking proper food will prepare us, by strengthening our bodies, to exhibit his character in all proper ways, we conclude that is what was intended by the precept. Now can we not prepare to honor God by attiring our persons consistently with good taste ?

But let us look at some of the instances in which we *do not dress* to the glory of God. 1st, We do not dress to his glory when we follow those fashions which are decidedly injurious to the health. God is a skilful architect, and the human body in its perfect form, is a wonderful exhibition of beauty and proportion; and dressing so as to preserve this natural symmetry, is not only right, but desirable. But improving upon

God's plan, or rather, by the genteel machinery now in use, compressing those organs which are necessary to life, can never be done to his glory, inasmuch as it violates an express command, by destroying that life which God has not only guarded by man's instinctive love of it, but also, by the terrors of Sinai.

2d, We do not dress to the glory of God, when we follow or give countenance to those fashions which indecently expose the person. That there are fashions which do thus exhibit the human form, cannot be questioned; but would I might say they receive no countenance from those of whom we had hoped better things. But how has it happened that these fashions have obtained currency? Is it not the fact that the community have so long felt, *that fashions were things with which Christians have nothing to*

*do, the reason why they are under the control of those who are destitute of moral principle?* Fashions are simply modes of dress; proper fashions are proper modes of dress, and improper fashions are improper modes of dress, and *the* fashion is the *prevailing* mode. Now a Christian must dress in *some* manner, for reasons before mentioned, and we have seen the Bible does not prescribe the Christian fashion. Now if she dresses in a style altogether new, as she must do, if she does not conform to others, she will be the *first* in a fashion, and what is worse than all, would be an *oddity*. The old fashions which impenitent persons have laid aside, would be as improper for Christians to follow *now*, as when they were first introduced. And, say those who are not pious, how badly it looks to see a Christian dressed in the *newest style*. I am willing

to allow, with my impenitent friends, that there is sin, and much sin in following the fashions; but in what does it consist? It may be, either in setting our hearts upon them, or in following an improper fashion, or in following one too expensive for us, or in spending all our time and money in the *fluctuations* of fashion. When a garment is made, there is no more sin in having it made according to the custom, than there is in having it made otherwise. In view of these things, is it not the duty of Christians to dress in such a manner, as while it is consistent with the simplicity of the gospel, will give no place to the objection that is so often urged, that religion is opposed to all good taste.

3d, We do not dress to the glory of God, when we indulge in *extravagance.* What is extravagance? Let us in the first place, see what it is *not.*

1st, it does not consist in making what little we possess as beautiful as the circumstances of the case will admit. But how many have been charged with this sin, and especially ministers' wives, whose only fault consisted in turning their little all to the best advantage. God created all things out of nothing, and do not those exhibit the image of their Creator, who make much of little? 2d, extravagance does not *necessarily* consist in using the *first quality* of all articles which we consume. It may be, and when the *means* will justify it, doubtless is, the best *economy*. But extravagance is a *relative* term, and can no more be defined by an absolute definition, than the adverbs much and more. What would be costly array for a girl dependent on her own exertions for support, would be *common attire* for her who is possessed of mil-

lions, and it ought to be so; those who possess much money, should aid in its circulation. But if those who are wealthy spend nothing but what is barely necessary for life, then the poorer class would not be able to live *at all.* But what then is extravagance, I hear you inquire with still greater earnestness. If it is a sin to indulge in it, and we do not know when we do it, how can we guard against it? The classical definition is easily given. "Going beyond proper limits." But there again you meet me with the question, what are the proper limits? Ah! there is the difficulty. But after all, let us see if they cannot be ascertained. *The Christian's limits are found in his circumstances.* Let us look at some of the prominent circumstances in which all Christians are placed, and which must affect the duties of all Christians. The first cir-

cumstance in which a Christian's limits are found, is his *means*. Every person who lives, has some means by which he lives, or rather by which his necessary wants are supplied. If he be a child of indigent parents, supported by charity or public funds, his *means* are the results of individual charity, or public munificence, and his *expenses* must be regulated accordingly. Is he a child, nursed in the lap of ease and elegance, and supported by the wealth of his parents? his means are a parent's liberality and indulgence, and his duties all receive color, and his obligations are enhanced accordingly. Is he a man of sorrow, whose hard earnings are daily divided between those dependent on his exertions, but whom the best result of his toil, is insufficient to supply with proper food and clothing? His means are what he earns by the sweat of his

brow, and for a right use of them, he is as responsible as though he controlled a million. Is he one of fortune's favorites, possessed of all the wealth which would gratify the heart of an avaricious man? These bounties of heaven are his means, the use of which, while it may increase his temporal happiness, will hereafter augment the fire of divine indignation, or prepare for him a richer, brighter inheritance in the world of glory.

The second class of circumstances in which a Christian's limits are found, is his duties growing out of his relations to his fellow creatures, as a *social being*. That God has made man a social being, is admitted by all. Out of this nature grow relations which would not have otherwise existed. The relation of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, grandchild and grandparent,

and so on, in more remote connection, result from this nature, and in accordance with it they will congregate together. Thus will be formed a community, which will require the enactment of laws for its regulation, and thus lay the foundation for the station of officers and people. And again, according to the social principle, a number of these communities will unite, and form a larger association, which being more complicated, will require governors over the former rulers, thus multiplying stations of different grades; and this may be continued in proportion to the number of social beings who exist. And the fact that God has made man a social being, and these relations and stations necessarily grow out of his social nature, makes these relations and stations right. Then if these relations are right, it is our duty to sustain them in a proper

manner, for out of these relations, in their most perfect state, grows the ability to perform our duties to our fellow creatures, as moral beings. For by a reference to the preceding chapter it will be seen, that things unimportant, and neither right nor wrong in themselves, may in their *place*, be the means of securing to us all the benefits which result from civilization and Christian benevolence. Then, if these things are so, it is the duty of a man to support himself and family consistently with the station in which he is placed. These duties must begin at home, but they must not, by any means, end there. Private charities, according to our means, conscientiously judged, are duties also resulting from this relation; and he who neglects them, on the plea that the support of his family in their proper station requires all his income,

performs but a part of his duty, and gives rise to a suspicion that even that is not performed with reference to the glory of God.

The third class of circumstances in which a Christian's limits are found, are the duties which grow out of his relations to his fellow creatures, as *moral beings*. The great moral family of which we form a part, is composed of no less than 800 millions of immortal beings, "the redemption of whose soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever." Now, about 50 millions only, are properly acquainted with the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, leaving a remainder of 750 millions, either almost or altogether ignorant of the requirements of God's holy law, or the awful penalties which follow its violation. Now God has plainly pointed out our duty, resulting from these relations, and laid us under

obligations immediately to labor for the enlightening of our brethren who sit in darkness, and are perishing for lack of vision. But what shall be done? We cannot in one day, or in one year enlighten or christianize all the waste and desolate places, should every one devote all their time to the work. There are obstacles in the way, which it takes years to overcome. The languages of the different countries and tribes are among those difficulties, which it takes time and money to remove. But thousands are dying whilst we are halting, and what must be done in order to secure this end? In the first place we must not require those things to be done as Christian duties, which will, *in the end*, be an injury instead of a benefit to the suffering heathen. It is a fact, that many oppressed with their anxiety for their brethren in spiritual bondage, and

perplexed with the vanity and extravagance which pervades our community, have gone to the other extreme, and required us to dispense with every thing which was not absolutely necessary, and classed those who were unwilling to do so, with those unwilling to take up the cross. Some have made it a test of Christian character. Among those who have been thus severe in their demands, Mr. Judson may be classed, for his principles, carried out, lead to that result. The little tract entitled the "Standard of Christian Benevolence and Self Denial," also appears to have the same tendency. Now there is nothing gained by requiring too much, in the *end*, any more than there is by overworking. The principle which those above alluded to have started upon, namely, that the soul is of more value than all the world beside, *is true*, and

it is true also, that we are required to consecrate all that we possess to God, —to give up *all*, or a *part* of it, just as he requires; and it would be our duty to give up every business, every pleasure, every expense, save that which is absolutely necessary, if it were required, or would remedy the evil; or, if it would not, in the end, be an injury to those whom it was designed to benefit.

But secondly, we must hold all our property as the Lord's and spend it for ourselves and families, or for the salvation of a dying world, as we think a God of infinite purity and benevolence would require. And say not, this is leaving it at loose ends. God's requirements can all be understood by the heart which seeks divine guidance. He has made part of our duties respect ourselves, part our families, and part our fellow creatures in their different relations. Now as a

part can never make a whole, so the law of God can never be fully obeyed, while we hold but one part as binding. It is a comforting thought that duties never clash ; that God has so ordered events, that the proper performance of one duty facilitates the performance of every other duty.

But perhaps you may ask, cannot you give us some definite rule, which will enable us to determine how much we must contribute to the cause of benevolence ? I reply, there is no definite rule which will apply to every individual case. We have general rules in the word of God, and circumstances and other minor precepts, limit their application. But perhaps some one may object, by saying, that God has given us a definite rule—he that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple. This looks like one to be sure. But the meaning is very evident. That we

should consecrate all we possess to God, and hold that property which he has lent to us, as not our own. That we should be ready to resign all, or a part of it, as He calls for it. He may, and does, in many cases, require the sacrifice of all we hold dear, and we should always be in such a state, as, should he call, we could cheerfully surrender it. We may be said, in one sense, to be the almoners of God's bounty, and it is unreasonable to suppose that he would require us to dispose of it in such a way as to be the means of injury instead of good. We are to forsake our property in the same sense that we forsake our father and mother, and we all know what was intended by the last requirement. The Jews were required to give something more than one tenth of their gross income, for the support of religious objects. Now although I do not consider that as an authorita-

tive example, binding upon the conscience now, yet it can hardly be supposed that Christians should be required to do *less* than the Jews. But suppose we do *as much*, what would be the consequences? Let us see. Suppose there are 250,000 Christian families in our country, and that their gross annual income averages $500. The total income of these families would be $125,000,000. One tenth of this, if consecrated to the service of Christ, would give an annual income to our benevolent and philanthropic societies of $12,500,000. But this is not all. One act of benevolence opens the way for more. It would be necessary to increase the amount devoted, annually, to the purposes of Christian benevolence. But the income of the Christian community does not remain stationary, any more than the income of others, and the annual increase of the *tenth* would be

more than sufficient to meet the demands for increased effort to spread the blessings of the gospel. If then, but one *tenth* of our annual income were consecrated to the spread of the gospel, how long should we be obliged to inquire, what are the duties growing out of our moral relations? How soon would the wave of salvation roll over the earth! Scarcely would a single generation pass away, before the dark places of the earth, now full of the habitations of cruelty, would be filled with the light and blessedness of the gospel of peace.

Thus have we attempted to ascertain the duties which grow out of our moral relations, and we may be said to be extravagant, when we transgress the three above mentioned limits; viz. our means, and the duties which grow out of our social and moral relations. Thus we see that there is no

absolute rule by which we can judge of individual guilt or innocence of the sin of extravagance, unless we are acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. But this does not prevent us from saying, and fearlessly, too, that there is extravagance in our Christian community. But if we cannot detect it certainly, in individual cases, how can we in the community? I answer, by the effects. If all God's requirements were perfectly obeyed, they would lead to perfect results. If we had done our duty, and lived according to our means, and in the discharge of our duties growing out of our social and moral relations, how long should we hear the cry coming from the east and west, from the south and the north, come and help us ere we die? How long would the car of Juggernaut roll triumphantly over its millions, inflicting upon

both body and soul eternal misery? How long would thousands go down to the gates of woe, who never heard the accents of mercy? We are guilty. We have been rolling in luxury, and leaving millions to cry, unheard, for the bread of life, while it was in our power to afford them relief. The price of blood has been written on our garments, and it cries to heaven for vengeance. All that has been expended for ourselves, more than was required by our social relations, has been done at the expense of *millions of immortal souls*. And for what has this enormous sacrifice been made? The true reply would cause a blush from *humanity* even, how much more then should *Christians* humble themselves before God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, when we consider the awful fact, that our *own gratification* has thus peopled the world of despair!

Let us then, dear Madam, in view of suffering, deluded, dying millions, every moment entering an unknown eternity, unprepared for the awful scenes which await them; in view of that day when our Savior and Redeemer shall sit upon the great white throne, judging the assembled universe; in view of the love of Jesus, who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich, let us so perform our duties which respect our social and moral relations, and so exert our influence to induce others to do the same, as that we may receive the heavenly welcome, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

I am your affectionate friend,

M. T.

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